

Washington, DC -- Congressman Vern Buchanan (FL-13) today praised the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) for reaching agreement on the dredging of Wares Creek in Bradenton. The FDEP has issued a state permit necessary to move ahead with the project.

"This long-awaited project has now cleared a major hurdle," said Buchanan. "I want to praise the DEP and the Army Corps for working together to hammer out an agreement that allows the dredging to move forward in an environmentally responsible way."

Buchanan had secured a commitment in January of 2008 from the Army Corp and the FDEP that they would make it a top priority to complete the agreement.

"DEP's announcement moves the ball down the field, but we still have some work to do," added Buchanan. "I am hopeful that the county and the corps will tie up any loose ends so we can break ground on this project."

Manatee County and the ACOE are working on a cooperative agreement for the project, which will need to be put out to bid and contracts awarded. The county is also working to secure properties necessary to widen the creek.

The two-term Member of Congress has secured a total of \$8.5 million to dredge the flood-prone creek and increased the project's federal authorization from \$13.8 million to \$42.6 million.

"The people of this neighborhood have been waiting more than 20 years for the creek to be dredged," said Buchanan. "It will reduce flooding and save taxpayer dollars in the long run. It will also improve the quality of life for area residents."